

“THAT’S NOT IN MY POSITION DESCRIPTION”

PURPOSE: To offer management and supervisors insight on what they can and cannot do when assigning work duties that are not included in the employee’s position description.

SCOPE: This operations guide applies to managers and supervisors.

GENERAL: At times you may encounter an employee who refuses to perform assigned work and states as a reason for his/her refusal, “that’s not in my job description.” In this case it is important for you to understand the uses of a position description (PD)/position guide (PG), your authority to assign work, and the employee’s responsibility to perform assigned work.

GUIDANCE:

A position description is not an all inclusive description of the duties an employee may be asked to perform. It is merely a reflection of the **major** duties and responsibilities assigned to an employee on a regular and recurring basis. The main use of the PD/PG is for classifying the position, e.g., determining the proper pay plan, occupational series, and grade. There is no requirement, nor is it practical, to include minor or insignificant duties in the PD/PG. **It does not limit your right as a supervisor to assign work.**

You as a supervisor have the absolute right to assign work within the following parameters:

- You should not assign work that places employees into an unsafe situation and for which they are not qualified. For example, you should not ask a laborer to operate a forklift if he/she does not possess the necessary license or qualifications to operate that equipment. You should not ask a secretary to rewire an electrical outlet when he/she is not qualified to do that work. If you ask employees to perform work they are not qualified for and an employee has an accident, you will probably be liable for placing that employee into that unsafe condition.
- You should not ask an employee to perform work that is illegal, immoral, or unethical.
- You may ask an employee to perform work in the absence of another employee, however in cases where the assignment will be for an extended period of time you must consider whether a personnel action is appropriate. If you expect the assignment to last less than 30 days, a detail is probably the most appropriate action. If the assignment is to a higher graded position and will last more than 30 days, AF guidelines require the action be processed as a “temporary promotion,” and the employee be paid at the higher rate.

- If you assign work that will become a permanent part of the job, impact the classification of the position, be performed on a regular and recurring basis, occupy a significant amount of the employee's time, require additional qualifications, or is important in the evaluation of that employee's performance, you need to modify the official PD/PG and submit it to the Human Resource Office (HRO) for review.
- If there is a union at the installation, you must be familiar with the local negotiated agreement. At times this agreement may contain requirements that differ from AF guidance. For example, some agreements dictate supervisors must temporarily promote employees to higher-grade positions, even if the assignment is less than 30 days. Others require union notification of changes in assignments. If you have questions regarding negotiated agreements you should contact your HRO.

SUMMARY:

As a supervisor you have the responsibility and authority to assign work. In turn, it is the employee's responsibility to perform that work to the best of their abilities. Just because a duty is not described in the PD or PG there is no excuse for the employee not to perform that work. If an employee refused to perform assigned work, he or she is being insubordinate, and insubordination may be grounds for disciplinary action. Recognize also, you are responsible to keep PDs/PGs accurate and up to date and to notify the HRO when permanent and significant changes occur to an employee's assignment. See the HRO for additional information or guidance.